



United States
Office of Personnel Management

FWS Job Grading Standard for Utility Systems Operator

5406

TS-69, 7/93

**Workforce Compensation and Performance Service
Classification Programs Division
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COVERAGE OF STANDARD

This standard covers nonsupervisory work concerned primarily with operating two or more utility systems such as boiler plants, air conditioning, wastewater treatment, water treatment, and natural gas distribution systems for large buildings or small complexes, on a continuing basis. Operators must be familiar with and have the abilities to adjust and regulate a variety of automatic or manually controlled auxiliary equipment to insure maximum operating efficiency of the systems. This standard covers those jobs that entail operation of two or more utility systems, evaluated at the same grade level, when no single skill or knowledge of a single utility is predominant for recruitment, promotion, reduction-in-force, paysetting, and other personnel processes.

WORK NOT COVERED

This standard does not cover work that primarily involves:

- Operation of a single type of utility system such as heating, air conditioning, wastewater treatment, or water treatment. (See other series in the [5400 Fixed Industrial Equipment Operation Family](#).)
- Operation and repair of one or more utility systems. (See [Job Grading Standard for Utility Systems Operator-Repairer, 4742](#).)

TITLES

Jobs covered by this standard are titled *Utility Systems Operator*.

GRADES

This standard does not limit grades to those illustrated. Some jobs may differ substantially from the levels of skill, knowledge, and other work requirements of the grades illustrated in this standard. Such jobs may be graded at either higher or lower levels, applying the mixed job policy.

NOTES TO USERS

This standard covers jobs that, because of the requirements of the facility or the seasonal nature of the work, combine two or more trade practices (i.e., operating two or more utility systems). Two main elements are constant, regardless of the possible occupational combinations:

1. The work requires more than one trade practice, and

2. The highest grade level of work is performed in at least two of the trades involved. Jobs that meet these two criteria and the definition in the WORK COVERAGE paragraph are considered to be in this occupation. The grading chart in the standard is intended to show how jobs in this occupation are graded. Other grade levels may be appropriate as the work examples illustrated are not intended to show typical combinations of work. Rather, they are presented to clearly demonstrate:
 1. The technique to be used in grading jobs in this occupation, and
 2. The technique to be used in grading other jobs in utility operations that do not meet the criteria.

If the highest level of work (without credit for shift responsibility) represents a single occupation, the job should be titled, coded, and graded according to the job grading standard for the single occupation that represents the highest skill and qualification requirements of the predominant line of work.

Special Additional Responsibilities

This section provides guidance for determining the grade level of certain utility systems operating situations. The UTILITY SYSTEMS OPERATOR STANDARD describes normal operation. However, employees in certain operations work under special circumstances. When positions clearly meet the criteria described below, one additional grade may be credited to utility systems operator positions at the full performance level whether they work alone or with a small group of utility systems operating employees. It is the intent of this provision that only one operator on each shift be credited with an additional grade for shift-level responsibility.

Additional grade credit will be added only to utility systems operators at the full performance level who are assigned shift responsibility on a regular and recurring basis. Credit will not be given to operators who regularly work when a shift supervisor is present or at a nearby facility.

Most plants run on a 7-day, 3-shift plan. Operators may be assigned to a specific shift or alternate working on all three shifts, including weekends. On second and third shifts and on weekends, one operator is typically designated as the "operator in charge" of the complete plant, including ancillary and standalone facilities which may be geographically dispersed, and he or she is responsible for following instructions which are typically supplied in writing from a supervisor or by the "operator in charge" on the previous shift. The "operator in charge" typically performs duties which are more responsible and require a slightly higher level of skill and knowledge than full performance level operators who are on duty where a supervisor is available to provide specific guidance and assistance.

The "operator in charge" must have a thorough knowledge of the entire utility systems and the user requirements in order to locate problems and initiate immediate corrective action to maintain adequate power distribution. He or she, in the absence of written contingency procedures, must have the responsibility to decide whether to shut down the operation or attempt to bypass the trouble until corrective action has been completed if the equipment still in operation can handle the load. Typically, the "operator in charge" has responsibility to determine what work must be done and has the authority to approve overtime or to call in necessary maintenance personnel. The operator is responsible for relaying instructions to the next shift operator including problems encountered and action taken. While these and other similar situations do not describe supervisory responsibilities, they represent situations which indicate that individuals designated as "operator in charge" have more responsibility and a higher level of skill and knowledge than operators who have a supervisor who is available for technical advice and guidance.

5406-9**UTILITY SYSTEMS OPERATOR, GRADE 9****5406-9**

General: Grade 9 utility systems operators use manual and automatic controls to operate two or more utility systems on a continuing basis. The work consists of starting, regulating, and stopping the equipment and performing routine operator maintenance. The operators regularly make rounds of the areas where the machinery and equipment are located, reading gauges and meters, making needed adjustments, taking and recording readings, and performing other related duties such as conducting chemical tests, and adding chemicals, lubricants, and water. Grade 9 operators perform operator maintenance and minor repairs. The complexity of the systems operated and the level of difficulty and responsibility are equivalent to those described in job grading standards for the kinds and levels of work shown in the following examples. (Examples of similar jobs that are assigned to other occupations are also shown.)

I. These examples MEET the criteria for inclusion in this standard:

Mixed Work Examples		Title, Code, and Grade	
Air Conditioning Equipment Operator	5415-9	Utility Systems Operator	5406-9
Boiler Plant Operator¹	5402-9		
Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator	5408-9	Utility Systems Operator	5406-9
Water Treatment Plant Operator	5409-9		
Boiler Plant Worker	5402-8		
Air Conditioning Equipment Operator	5415-9	Utility Systems Operator	5406-10²
Boiler Plant Operator (Includes additional grade for shift level responsibility)	5402-10		

/1/ The Boiler Plant Operator job grading standard (TS-60, March 1991) does not contain a grade 9 level. However, according to the GRADE LEVELS section contained in that standard, a grade 9 level can exist.

/2/ Utility Systems Operator grade level shown reflects shift level responsibility added to the base level. If grade 10 level has been assigned because of shift level responsibility, yet job analysis indicates grade 9 level work, the job should be titled, coded, and graded to the 5406 series as shown. Using this standard (5406), *shift level responsibility* credit is added to final computed grade.

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II. These examples DO NOT MEET the criteria for inclusion in this standard:

Mixed Work Examples	Title, Code, and Grade
Air Conditioning Equipment Operator 5415-9 Boiler Planer Worker 5402-8 Water Plant Operator 5409-7	 Air Conditioning Equipment Operator 5415-9
Boiler Plant Operator 5402-9 Water Plant Operator 5409-7 Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator 5408-8	 Boiler Plant Operator 5402-9